

With Liberty and Justice for All

2 Samuel 8:1-18

By [Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas](#)

Now turn with me if you would to 2 Samuel chapter 8; 2 Samuel chapter 8. Last time when we were in Samuel, we were in chapter 7, one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament, because it's the chapter in which we find the Davidic Covenant, the covenant that God makes with David, that on the throne of Israel there will be a king. And God makes a covenant that that kingship will be forever. You'll remember that one of the things in chapter 7 that David had asked to do was to build a temple for God. And God said, "No." Solomon, his son, would be the one who would build the temple.

Every now and then, preachers get told after preaching a sermon something they wish they would have been told before the sermon because it was so good you would incorporate it into the sermon. Well, two people did that to me two weeks ago, right at the end. They're both here, I think. I won't name you! One person said, "What do you do when God says "No"? You sing the doxology." That's good, isn't it? You sing the doxology. When God frustrates your plans and dreams and ambitions, you sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." And then another person, both of these were elders, by the way, the second person said to me, "We may not have a temple from David, but we have something better — the Psalms. The temple was a structure that lasted for a few centuries. The Psalms are with us still. God said "No" because He had something better for David." That's a good way, I think, to think about times when God says "No" because He has something better for you to do.

Well, tonight we come to a chapter — I was thinking this morning as Ligon was in a chapter on the Sabbath — that wonderful sermon that Ligon preached to us on the Sabbath this morning [Luke 14:1-6] — and tonight we're in a chapter that is really history. And you know, you have to be, you have to be a Christian, you have to love the Bible to fully appreciate why it is that we can get all excited about a passage about the Sabbath as we did this morning, and tonight, I hope, we're going to get all excited about a chapter that's really all about history because this is a glorious passage. At first, it looks like just an ordinary chapter about a king who has a lot of military victories and does well. But this is no ordinary king. This is King David. This is God's king on God's throne.

Now before we read the passage, let's look to God in prayer.

Father, again we are mindful that as we begin to read these lines that they are lines from Scripture - a Book that is unlike any other book in the whole world, a Book written by the finger of God, a Book that is infallible and inerrant and is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. But we need Your blessing. We need the help of the Holy Spirit. So we ask that we might read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest for Jesus' sake. Amen.

This is God's Word:

After this David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and David took Gath out of the hand of the Philistines.

And he defeated Moab and he measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground. Two lines he measured to be put to death, and one full line to be spared. And the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute.

David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the river Euphrates. And David took from him 1, 700 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers. And David hamstringed all the chariot horses but left enough for 100 chariots. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down 22,000 men of the Syrians. Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Syrians became servants to David and brought tribute. And the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. And from Bethan and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took very much bronze.

When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer, Toi sent his son Joram to King David, to ask about his health and to bless him because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Hadadezer had often been at war with Toi. And Joram brought with him articles of silver, of gold, and of bronze. These also King David dedicated to the Lord together with the silver and gold that he dedicated from all the nations he subdued, from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

And David made a name for himself when he returned from striking down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. Then he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.

So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people. Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder, and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, and Seraiah was secretary, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and David's sons were priests.

Well, may God bless to us that reading of His holy and inerrant Word.

Now there are three things I want us to see in this passage tonight. This is not just history, this is covenant history. This is the history of King David. This is the history of the kingdom of God. In chapter 7 we saw the covenant that inaugurates the kingdom of David, and now in chapter 8 we see that kingdom coming into being.

I. The success of David's kingdom — God's purposes can never be thwarted.

The first thing I want us to see is this — that 2 Samuel 8 follows 2 Samuel 7. That's it. I want us to see that. Yes, because the success, the triumph, the spread of David's kingdom in chapter 8 is the result of the promise, the covenant, that God makes with David in chapter 7. It ought not to come as a surprise that chapter 8 is about the spread and the triumph of the kingdom of David. That is, after all, what God has promised David in chapter 7 - that his kingdom would be an everlasting kingdom. David is seeing the fulfillment of what God had promised to Abraham. You remember God had said to Abraham in chapter 12 to go out and look at the stars and “so shall your people be.” And then you remember in chapter 17 God comes to Abraham again and says, “Look, the whole of Canaan will be yours.” As far as Canaan stretched, from north to south and east to west, would be part of the land of Israel.

And now that's coming to pass. That's the way in which this is being recorded for us in the opening verses of chapter 8. In the west, the Philistines in verse 1. And then in the east, you have the Moabites. And to the north and northeast you've got the Syrians. And to the south you've got the Edomites. So you're going west and you're going east and you're going north and you're going south. And this is the expansion of the kingdom of David but it's in accord with the promise that God had made to Abraham.

The lesson is very simple. Can anything thwart the purpose of God? When God makes a promise, when God says, “I will do such and such,” when God made that promise to Abraham, when God made that promise with David, can anything thwart, bring to naught, the promise that God makes? No, of course not. When God says something it will come to pass. We were thinking about promises in

relation to a covenant this morning with respect to children. God makes promises, strong promises, powerful promises.

Can anyone thwart the purposes of God? God had said, "As far as you can see Canaan, Abraham, and beyond, that's going to be the land." I'm not asking tonight, I'm not asking "Will the United States of America triumph into the twenty-second, the twenty-third, the twenty-fourth century?" I'm not asking that question. I'm not saying as, in the 19th century when Britain ruled the waves — Rule Britannia — you could buy a map and all the places where Britain ruled were colored in pink and it covered half the globe. No one in their right minds would think of that today in 2010. There were hymns written in the mid to late 19th century in which you could see the way in which the hymn writer brought the promises of God and attached them to the advancement of the British Commonwealth. God wasn't making any promises about the British Commonwealth, but when God makes a promise — here's a promise; here's a promise — "I will build My church."

Matthew 16, Caesarea Philippi — Jesus is speaking openly now about His mission. He says to the disciples, "I will build My church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." That's a promise. When Jesus sends out His disciples at the end of Matthew's gospel, "Go into all the world and make disciples, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age," can anything destroy that promise that Jesus makes? "I will build My church. I will build My church."

If somebody says, if somebody says the church will not survive the 21st century, they are wrong. They are wrong. I don't care who's saying it, they are wrong, because the Word of God is clear and the Word of God cannot be broken. That's the principle that you see in 2 Samuel 8 as David expands his kingdom. Yes, it belongs to the old covenant. It belongs to a promise that was made specifically about Israel. But when God makes a promise, when God makes a promise it can never ever be destroyed.

The Bible seems to me to say that towards the end, before Jesus returns, there will be great evil in the world. That's my own understanding of end times in the Bible. I believe that before Jesus comes there will be an appearance of a personal anti-Christ figure of some kind. I believe there will be a battle between good and evil. I'm optimistic about the nature of that good. I'm optimistic about the size of that good, but there will be a battle. It will be a battle that - the book of Revelation calls it the battle of Armageddon; Ezekiel calls it the battle of Gog and Magog. One thing I'm absolutely sure of, that evil will not triumph.

Turn with me to Revelation chapter 20, Revelation 20 and verses 7, 8, and 9. This is the passage about the thousand years — we won't go into that; we haven't time — but let me just say that my understanding is that the thousand years represent that period of time from the ascension of Jesus right through today and right up almost to the very end. And then in verse 7 — "And when the

thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, *but, but* fire came down from heaven and consumed them.”

Will evil triumph? No it will not. The church of Christ will triumph. The purposes of God will triumph. The promises of God are yes and amen in Jesus Christ. That's the first thing I want us to see. The purposes of God can never be thwarted.

Just a little detail — David hamstringed the horses. Did you see that? David hamstringed the horses. Verse 4 — he left only a hundred horses, enough for a hundred chariots. There were 1,700 horsemen, presumably 1,700 horses able to draw chariots. You know, what's that all about? Well, let's get past the issue of whether that was cruelty to animals or anything like that. Let's get past that and answer the more important question here — Why did David do this? Well the NIV Study Bible says David didn't understand the value of the horse as a military weapon.

Who writes these things? David didn't understand the value of a horse for a military weapon?! He's surrounded by people with horses!

Have you ever looked at the topography of Israel? It was not a place for chariots. You need flat land for chariots. There was no place in Israel for 1,700 of them.

But more importantly, do you remember the number of times in the psalms David says, “Don't trust in horses; don't trust in horses”? Where is Israel's triumph to be laid? What's the real cause for the triumph of Israel, for the triumph of David, for the triumph for the kingdom of God? It doesn't lie in military resources! It lies in God. It lies in the promises of God, and at the very heart of this theocratic nation which is a part of the process of the history of redemption, at this very special point in history, David perhaps is saying to his people, “Don't trust in horses. Trust in the Lord.” That's the first thing.

II. Stewardship — it all belongs to God.

The second thing I want us to see, and you see it there in verses 7 through 12, it's a principle of stewardship. Yes, this is stewardship season. I wasn't looking for a principle of stewardship but it's right here. You notice in these verses David captures the wealth — shields made of silver and gold and much bronze — and you notice in verse 10 he brings them all into the house of God. At the end of verse 10, “Joram brought with him articles of silver and gold and bronze” and in verse 11, “He dedicated them from all the nations he subdued.” He gives them over to God. This is God's wealth. This is God's doing. The cattle on a thousand

hills belongs to the Lord. He's recognizing, do you see, even in his conquest, even in the expansion of the kingdom, "unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it." And all the triumphs and all the gains belong to Him first of all.

You know that principle is still a principle in the kingdom of God. It's a principle for us today. Everything we have, it's not mine first of all. The Bible does allow for personal, private ownership, but only as a steward of the things that God has first of all owned Himself. Everything we have first of all belongs to Him. And there's a pattern here. You notice in verses 9 and 10 this character called Toi, he sends his son, Joram to David. He asks about his health. You understand he was no more interested in David's health than he was in the Queen of Sheba, but he's asking about David's health because yes, on one level, he understands when it's the right time to throw in the towel. And the nations around are capitulating to David and he must do the same. He's yielding, he's submitting to God's anointed king.

I don't know when David wrote the second psalm. I imagine it was around this time. It's a psalm about triumph. It's a psalm about the advancement of the kingdom of God. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way. Blessed are those who take refuge in him." This is what Toi was doing, this king was doing. He was yielding to God's anointed king. It's a principle, it's a figure if you like, it's a pattern — it's a pattern that's still operative today.

There is only one King — the King of Kings, great David's greater son, Jesus. In the life of David there are these recurring patterns and motifs that are meant to be little windows as to the nature of the kingdom of God, the kingdom that you and I belong to by faith in Jesus Christ.

Some of you perhaps here tonight think that you worshipped God tonight, but you haven't because your hearts are still unregenerate. You can never worship God truly until you kiss the Son, until you submit to Him, you come to Him — "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner" — you take Him, you own Him as Lord and Savior and Prophet and Priest and King. This was a little glimpse of it here in David's life. It's not David that we bow to, it's David's greater son, Jesus, Jesus.

III. Justice.

There's a third thing I want us to see here and it's this — it's verse 15. It's a kind of summary of the whole chapter. "So David reigned over all Israel and David administered justice and equity to all his people." It's just a statement. It's a statement that a historian would write. He's summarizing this period in David's life when the kingdom of God has extended north, south, east, and west, and he's describing the nature of this king's administration and it's one of justice and equity.

A couple of Wednesdays ago we were celebrating the wonderful thing the veterans have done. And there was a little ritual up in Miller Hall that Wednesday night and some of you, many of you were there. And we had some young men dressed in uniform and the flag was brought in and I was standing sort of in the corner behind Ligon and Billy Joseph said, "We'll say the Pledge of Allegiance." And I put my hand on my heart and I thought, "Can I say the Pledge of Allegiance?" And I'm sorry, but I didn't say it. I thought the Queen would be, she would be offended! I still carry her passport, you understand, so I was repeating it in my head, but nothing came out here. You know, "One nation under God with liberty and justice for all." Well that's what we've got here. We've got one nation under God in verse 15 with justice and equity, with righteousness and justice perhaps.

You know, it must have been a great thing to be a part of that kingdom in David's time when there was justice for all. That's not the kingdom we live in in the world, is it? I mean absolutely no disrespect, you understand. I mean absolutely no disrespect to the United States of America, but this is not the kingdom of God. There's no justice for the unborn who never see the light of day. In David's kingdom there was justice and there was equity. It wasn't always like that, but for a moment, you know just for a moment, there was a little glimpse of what it would really be like to live in a nation where God was acknowledged, where His laws operated, where there was justice. You could go to the gate of a city and you could get justice.

That's what the kingdom of God will be like one day. You know, it's meant to be a figure of the Church. Where should you find justice and equity for all? You should find it in the Church, shouldn't you? That's what the Church should be like — reflecting a time when the kingdom of God will come in all of its triumph and glory and that New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven from God prepared like a bride for her bridegroom. And it will be perfect. It will be perfect. It will be wonderful to live in that city, the New Jerusalem, in the new heaven and new earth.

I've been reading the newspapers all week. Forgive me. British newspapers you know, online, because I'm fascinated — Kate Middleton and Prince William. You know, when's the wedding? Is it going to be in April? Am I going to be over there? Will Bill Wymond be playing the organ? (laughter) There's been a lot of talk, you know. Will there be a jump in the succession? You know, the Queen and then, not Charles but Prince William? And the majority of the people favor that except for the traditionists. It's all very fascinating. Kings, queens, presidents — they come and thankfully they go.

But this King, the King of whom David was just a little glimpse, I mean King Jesus, King Jesus in whose kingdom there is justice and righteousness and equity for all — perfection, perfection. This King will reign forever and ever and

ever.

You know, had you been around in David's day you could be forgiven for thinking this was it. You know, someone got fired in British politics for saying, "You've never had it so good." That's all he said, "You've never had it so good," and he was fired. He was insensitive to the economic climate you understand. But you could have been forgiven for thinking in David's time, "Can it ever get any better than this?" And the answer is, "Oh yes. Oh yes, this is just a little foretaste, but in the new heavens and new earth, well, the King of Kings will administer justice and equity to all His people."

Now that's something worth being thankful for on Thanksgiving week.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the Scriptures and as we tease out of them these wonderful, extraordinary truths, we thank You that by faith in Jesus Christ we belong to the kingdom that shall never end, not a kingdom like Narnia where it is always winter and never Christmas, but a kingdom in which it is always Christmas, always in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, even our Savior, Jesus Christ. Now make us thankful, we pray. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please stand. Receive the Lord's benediction. Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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